

# INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

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## KASHMIR



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF BASIC INTELLIGENCE

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Kashmir, officially Jammu and Kashmir, is a highly mountainous state about the size of Minnesota. Several major mountain ranges aligned northwest-southeast cross this area of 85,000 square miles and under movement to and from the Vale of Kashmir, the traditional center of local power. Kashmir lies at the juncture of Hindu, Muslim, and Tibetan-Buddhist cultural realms and has been fought over and ruled by a number of different peoples during its history. Past invaders from central and southern Asia have crossed the passes and settled the valleys, leaving their imprint in numerous distinctive states and principalities. This physical and cultural diversity and the lack of communication have been major factors contributing to a traditional lack of political cohesiveness and awareness of identity among its nearly 5 million inhabitants.

When a cease-fire halted fighting in 1949, India controlled about two-thirds of Kashmir -- an area with a population that now numbers about 3,560,000 persons, of whom 70 percent are Muslims. The most important territorial result of the cease-fire was that India gained control of the famed Vale of Kashmir. This valley, actually a level to gently rolling basin some 85 miles long and 25 miles wide that lies at an elevation of 5,500 feet, is the heart of Kashmir. Srinagar, the largest and most important city of Kashmir, is located in the Vale, and nearly 2 million inhabitants live on its rich agricultural land. India was also left in control of small areas of densely populated plains in the south, principally between Jammu and Kathua, and of about 75 percent of Kashmir's forests -- its most important resource. The remaining one-third of Kashmir, which in 1949 came under the control of Pakistan, has a population numbering slightly more than 1 million persons, of whom almost 100 percent are Muslims. The Pakistani part of Kashmir contains little wealth and little land suitable for cultivation. On the contrary, it has some of the most difficult terrain and many of the most isolated and backward areas in the state. The territory west of these cease-fire lines, including the districts of Muzaffarabad, Poonch, and Mirpur, was organized by Pakistan in November 1947 into Azad Kashmir (Free Kashmir), with an administrative center at the town of Muzaffarabad. According to Pakistan, Azad Kashmir is under a separate provisional government, pending settlement of the dispute, but actually it is controlled from Rawalpindi.

#### THE CEASE-FIRE LINE

The cease-fire line (CFL) extends from the Poonch plains on the south to the glaciers of the Karakoram Range on the north and thus crosses all of the major physical regions of Kashmir. These regions resemble a series of ascending south-to-north steps, culminating in the 25,000-foot Karakoram peaks. The southern sector of the CFL extends northwest from the Poonch to Uri, a town in the Jhelum Valley, and passes through relatively low hills and mountains. The northeastern sector crosses much higher terrain that is mostly barren, desolate, and largely uninhabited.

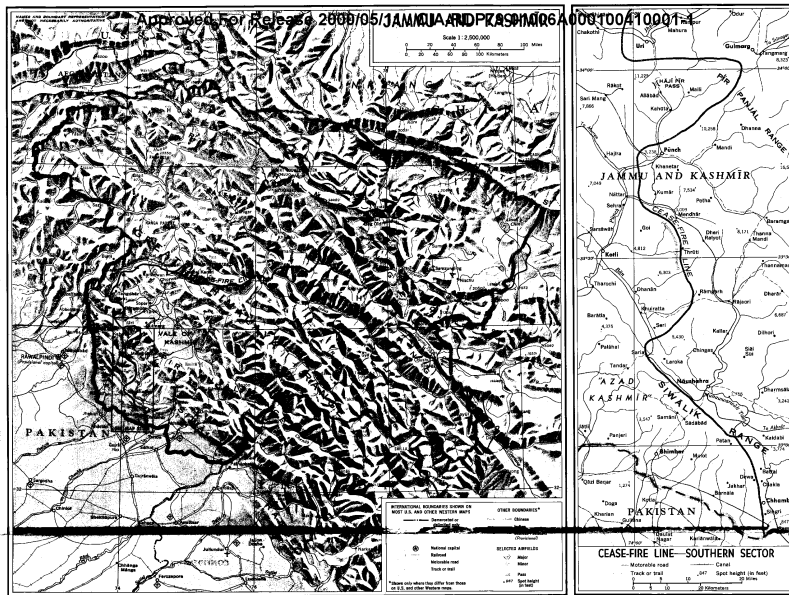
**Southern Sector:** The CFL extends north from the West Pakistan-Kashmir border about 3 to 4 miles west of and parallel to the valley of the Muzaffarabad Tawi River. For about 10 miles northeast the terrain consists of plains, at an elevation of approximately 1,000 feet, that are part of a narrow belt of similar terrain that extends along the entire southwestern frontier of Kashmir. The plains, which have cultivated fields and numerous villages, are level to gently rolling, with a pronounced north to south slope. In a few places, very small isolated mounds or hillocks rise 10 to 20 feet above the surface of the plains. The numerous streams that flow north to south through the plains characteristically have broad valley floors with sand and gravel. Most of the streams are dry except during the summer monsoon. Locally, erosion has produced a small-scale badland type of terrain with gullies and ravines 10 to 40 feet deep. The sparse vegetation in these waste areas is mostly scrub and coarse grass. On September 1965, Pakistan moved across the plains and entered Indian-held territory in the vicinity of Chamsi, threatening the town of Akhmer, some 12 miles to the east. The vital road to Poonch that serves Indian forces along almost the entire sector of the CFL passes through Akhmer. About 14 miles north of Akhmer, the CFL crosses the steep, barren, east-west town in Kashmir and the winter capital of Indian Kashmir, and the only noticable road supplying Indian forces in the Vale and along the China border in Ladakh passes through Jammu.

From the Northern edge of the plains the CFL extends northwest for about 30 miles, paralleling the scrub-covered, northwest-southeast ridges of the Swat Range. The terrain consists of ridges and valleys, with peaks and ridges 4,000 feet high and rise about 1,500 feet above the main valley floors; the ridges are steep-sided and difficult to cross. The main Indian supply route from Akhmer parallels the CFL and near Nushahra is only 3 miles or so from it. Northwest of Nushahra the CFL turns northeast and crosses the Chai River; from here it winds in a generally northerly direction, forming salients into Indian-held territory at Rajouri and Poonch. The terrain from Nushahra to the heights of the Pir Panjal Range consists of approximately 40 miles of very rough hill and valley country. Although agriculturally poor, the area is fairly densely populated and has small villages located on narrow valley floors or straggling up the sides of the steep, deep slopes. Although the main Indian supply routes generally follow valleys, there are two difficult climbs over numerous steep ridges 5,500 to 7,000 feet high, and the road probably is unusable only in winter. The Azad Kashmir posts are served by a road leading north from Mirpur via Kotli to the Panchnahra. The most difficult section is between Mirpur and Kotli where the road crosses the steep ridges of the Swat Range. A road also leads west from the Poonch Valley to Mirpur.

Northeast of Poonch the CFL enters the Pir Panjal Range, which forms the western rim of the Vale of Kashmir. Peaks of the Pir Panjal rise to elevations of 12,000 to 14,500 feet and many slopes as high as 11,000 feet are covered with coniferous forests, giving a general appearance strongly suggestive of the American Rockies. West of Gilgit the CFL follows the crest of the Pir Panjal for a

THE town of Poonch is on the Indian side of the cease-fire line.

For background on Kashmir's borders with Communist China, see CIA/RR OM 62-5, The Disputed Frontiers of Kashmir, November 1962, 5.



few miles and then turns west, paralleling the Jhelum Valley. Although the Pir Panjal and its associated ranges on the northwest form a considerable barrier to movement into the fertile Vale, a barrier broken only by the deep valley of the Jhelum River, numerous cattle trails and footpaths lead from southwestern Kashmir across the mountains and into the Vale. Throughout the summer and early fall, mountain forests and alpine pastures are extensively grazed by large numbers of sheep, goats, and cattle brought up by herders from the plains and lowlands. The Jhelum Valley, at an elevation of 4,000 to 5,000 feet, is the main approach to the Vale, however, and the recent Indian seizure of the Raji Pir Pass (elevation 8,650 feet) south of Uri was intended to prevent infiltration based in the Poonch salient from using the Jhelum route.

**Northeast Sector:** Near Uri, the CFL parallels the Jhelum River for a few miles and then runs northward to the Kishanganga River at Tithwal. From this point to Rajasabha, the line generally is a few miles east of and 4,000 to 5,000 feet higher than the Pakistani-held Kishanganga Valley, though in two places it follows the Kishanganga River itself for short distances. The terrain is similar to that of the Pir Panjal Range country, with deeply entrenched river valleys, large areas of coniferous forest, and barren, rocky peaks and ridges. Settlements are few, but there are small villages with scattered houses in the narrow river lowlands and occasional slopes below 7,000 or 8,000 feet.

Indian outposts north of the Jhelum Valley are supplied via a network of motorable routes leading from Srinagar to the Northern part of the Vale. In contrast, Pakistani posts are served from Muzaffarabad by two narrow roads that follow the steep slopes of the Jhelum and Kishanganga Valleys. Both roads are damaged frequently and blocked by mines during the summer monsoon.

North of Kishanganga the CFL crosses the upper Kishanganga Valley and ascends spurs of the Great Himalayan Range. For the remaining 175 miles to the Karakoram glaciers the line generally follows high peaks and ridges, mostly local water divides, at elevations averaging between 12,000 and 17,000 feet. The typical Kishanganga Valley overgrown, deep slopes extend to the crest of the northwest-southeast aligned Great Himalayan Range. Further east, however, the terrain is mostly barren and the country is generally uninhabited. Vegetation is limited mainly to scrub and planted trees near villages, the few settlements are small and are generally located in the major river valleys.

The Pakistani area to the north and northeast of the CFL is administratively within the Gilgit Agency, a collection of small princely states and tribal areas. This region is isolated from the rest of Pakistan and includes, in such areas as Hunza and Nagar, some of the world's most rugged terrain in which man tries to

make a living. Pakistani posts are few in this sector and probably occupied only seasonally. Access to the CFL is mainly via animal tracks along river valleys. A jeep road from Abbottabad north to Chilas is open for a few months during summer; other jeepable trails radiate from Shardu, but the two systems are not believed to be interconnected.

Most of the area south of the CFL in Indian-controlled territory is administratively part of Ladakh. This area is probably even higher on the average than northwestern Kashmir and is more sparsely inhabited, but in the very high mountains of the eastern part are some fairly broad, open valleys and very high, craggy, desolate peaks and basins.

The Indian posts are supplied by the important Srinagar - Leh road, which also serves Indian forces opposing the Chinese along the Ladakh border. From Dras to Kargil, however, this road closely approaches Pakistani territory, and at Kargil the Pakistani posts are only 3 miles from the road and overlook it from high ground. Pakistani raids against the road earlier this year led to Indian occupation of these posts; a later Indian withdrawal was followed by occupation during the present crisis.

#### CLIMATE

The climate of the southern sector of the CFL resembles that of the north Indian plains, with modifications induced by elevation. The summer monsoon normally lasts only from early July to early September. Rainfall, accompanied by considerable cloudiness, normally averages 10 to 15 inches during July and about the same during August. Precipitation increases with altitude, with rains and drizzle becoming mountains from the monsoon, and during July and August receives only 2 to 4 inches each month. The monsoon rain in northern India is unpredictable and very considerably. After the retreat of the monsoon and continuing until mid-December or later the weather is generally fine, with many clear days and little or no precipitation. This is the best season to conduct either ground or air military operations. With the approach of cooler weather, however, morning ground fog becomes increasingly common. In the Jammu area, in southwestern Kashmir and in the Poonch plains in the south, winter conditions are similar to those of autumn, with generally good weather, about 2 inches of rain each month from January through March are recorded in Jammu, and 1 inch each month for the same period at Lahore. Toward the northeast and in the higher hills, however, winter is marked by somewhat greater precipitation and some cloudy weather. At elevations below 5,000 feet, precipitation is mainly rain. Above 5,000 feet, snow lies on the ground overnight, and at 8,000 feet snow accumulates to a considerable depth and trails and passes are blocked periodically. Snow covers the Vale for most of the period from January through

mid-March, with depths occasionally up to a foot. Spring snowstorms are not infrequent and may temporarily block routes out of the Vale until early May.

The summer monsoon seldom reaches beyond the Great Himalaya Range north and east of the Vale. In the deep valleys of the Indian and its tributaries, a desertlike environment is encountered and yearly precipitation is a mere 1 to 8 inches. Precipitation, mostly snow, is greater on the high slopes and in the mountains, and trails and passes are periodically closed. Strong, biting winds and subfreezing, occasionally subzero, temperatures intensify problems of keeping supply lines open and vehicles in operating condition.

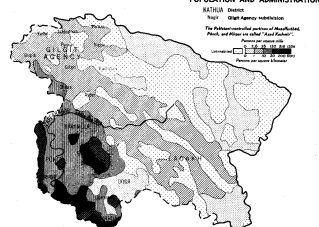
#### TRANSPORTATION

The traditional lines of communication between the plains and the Vale of Kashmir were altered by the establishment of the cease-fire line. Because the main Jhelum Valley access route to the Vale entered from Pakistan, India quickly improved and rebuilt sections of an existing road that led north from Jammu to Srinagar across many miles of hills and mountains. The road is open throughout the year (partly because of a tunnel through the Pir Panjal Range), although subject to damage from the monsoon rains and winter snows. The entire Indian position along the CFL as far north as Poonch is weakened by the fact that the main Indian supply route is so close to Pakistani territory. The southeastern section of this route, from Kathua to Akhmer, as well as the Jammu - Srinagar road, is similarly threatened by its nearness to the West Pakistan border. North of the Jhelum Valley and in the northeast, however, Indian posts along the CFL are reasonably well supplied by an interior network of roads and tracks radiating from the major supply base at Srinagar.

Pakistan and Azad Kashmir forces south of the Jhelum are supplied by roads from Rawalpindi and Jhelum via Mirpur and Mirpur, respectively. North of the Jhelum, however, roads are few and are difficult to maintain. East of the Kishanganga, Pakistani posts along the CFL are supplied by long and circuitous routes that require animal transport in some places.

Both India and Pakistan rely heavily on air resupply. Srinagar is a major airbase and large amounts of military goods are transported there from depots in northern India. Goods are stockpiled in the Vale to supply Indian forces facing the Chinese in Ladakh as well as those facing Pakistani troops along the CFL. The capability of the Pakistan Government to maintain its presence in the wild northwest China area depends largely on supplies brought by air to Gilgit and Shardu and then moved over perilous jeep roads to outlying areas.

#### POPULATION AND ADMINISTRATION



Area and Population of Kashmir

Area (in square miles) Population

Territory controlled by India	Area (in square miles)	Population
Administrative	5,097	694,498
Baramulla	4,360	1,084,403
Jammu	1,849	2,071,493
Kathua	1,024	207,193
Ladakh	57,754	108,661
Poonch	1,689	385,061
Uri	2,895	276,411
Wazirpur	1,731	294,061
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,666</b>	<b>3,256,076</b>

Territory controlled by Pakistan	Area (in square miles)	Population
Adi Kashmir	4,300	1,000,000
Gilgit Agency	27,000	160,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,300</b>	<b>1,160,000</b>

Area and population statistics for Indian-controlled Kashmir are taken from the 1951 census; statistics for Pakistan-controlled Kashmir are based on recent estimates.

The locational significance of the Indian line of communication in southern Kashmir is their close proximity to the West Pakistan border. From Poonch to Akhmer, via Jammu, the main Indian road lies 10 miles or less across open plains from the Pakistan border. In contrast, Pakistani supply lines to the CFL are protected by a combination of their distance from Indian-held territory and an alignment of roads across rough terrain that would make Indian interdiction difficult. The vast north Indian plains along the Kashmir boundary on the south. These densely populated plains in both Pakistan and farther east in India contain good road and rail networks. Movement of men and vehicles would be relatively easy, although several major northeast-southwest aligned rivers and a fairly dense network of canals present local obstacles.

#### OUTLOOK

To Pakistan, Kashmir is more than a territorial issue. The continued existence of a divided Kashmir has become a symbol of Indian aggressiveness and Pakistani inability to cope with Indian power. Frustrations have increased in recent years. India refuses even to discuss Kashmir, measures have been taken recently to tighten the constitutional bonds between Kashmir and India, and since late 1962 Indian military strength has been increased -- aided in part by equipment and training supplied by the West. It is within this framework that Pakistan organized and directed the recent paramilitary operation against Indian-held Kashmir. The objectives were to spark a Muslim revolt and generate international pressures enough to force a Kashmir settlement.

For India, in contrast, Kashmir has been but one of many foreign policy problems. The status quo is more palatable to India, since it is in control of the most important and productive areas, and a solution that does not allow Indian control of the Vale of Kashmir appears to be unacceptable. This position has been reinforced in recent years by the border conflict, between India and China, as the only ground route to supply Indian forces in eastern Ladakh runs through the Vale. An alternate route via the Richi Valley in the India is now under construction, but its completion probably is years away.

A settlement of the Kashmir dispute is of the key to peace in the subcontinent, but after 18 years a means of settling the dispute appears to be more remote than ever.

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